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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 000682

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [LO](#)

SUBJECT: COALITION MEETS: RUSKO LIKELY OUT BY FRIDAY

REF: A. BRATISLAVA 677

[1](#)B. BRATISLAVA 626

[1](#)C. BRATISLAVA 618

Classified By: DCM Lawrence R. Silverman for Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Sources with inside knowledge of the August 23 Coalition Council meeting told us that the Prime Minister will indeed dismiss Minister of the Economy Pavol Rusko, but not until Friday (reftels). Rusko told coalition partners he will not voluntarily step down. The source commented that Rusko prefers to be fired by the Prime Minister to save face in front of his ANO voters, who would view him as a "victim" rather than as someone who resigned in self-admission of guilt.

[1](#)2. (C) While Rusko will lose his Ministerial post, he will return to Parliament. One contact told us that this is Dzurinda's preferred solution, and that Rusko will want to remain in Parliament to preserve his immunity from prosecution. ANO will remain in the coalition. Rusko will propose ANO loyalist Vladimir Snir, a businessman from Eastern Slovakia, as the new Minister of Economy.

INSIDE ANO: DIVISION OVER RUSKO  
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[1](#)3. (C) During an ANO Presidium meeting Monday night, five members of the 22 person body either voted for Rusko to resign, or abstained from showing their support. Three of these five (Lubomir Lintner, Jirko Malcharek, and Minister of Culture Frantisek Toth), are Vice Presidents of the party. Contacts within ANO tell us that the meeting was quite heated, with one member of the body using words not suitable for print about the actions of her "cowardly male" colleagues who failed to support Rusko. Rusko himself has vowed to "clean house" at ANO and remove the "traitors" from his party.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: While today's Coalition Council meeting adds a degree of predictability to the future of Rusko and the coalition, the future of ANO as a party is even more in flux; post notes that this is Tuesday, and that by Friday, anything could happen. End Comment.

POSTSCRIPT: PRO-U.S. POLICIES WILL CONTINUE  
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[1](#)5. (C) During the Ambassador's credentials presentation today, President Gasparovic alluded to the coalition's "problems," but reassured the Ambassador that the government's pro-U.S. policies would remain unaffected.  
VALLEE

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